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A VOICE OF WARNING.

Inasmuch as many in different ages, and especially in modern times, have seen fit to publish and proclaim what they thought necessary to warn mankind of their mortality, and direct them how to be prepared for eternity, so we also feel obligated to publish to the world a plan of salvation, by which mankind may escape the wrath of Almighty God, and have an inheritance hereafter among the sanctified.

And while many addresses, though containing much truth, have been mixed up with error (being the dictation of man's wisdom, and the result of his judgment of the mind and will of God), we assert that what we would here communicate as the plan of salvation, is not of the flesh, nor of man, but of the will of God—that it is true—the only true.

Start not, gentle reader, at the boldness of our assertion, nor think that we rashly and unadvisedly make light of the judgments and efforts of others, but suspend your sentence while we plead our cause, and prove the truth of what we have stated.

We feel with you, perhaps, that there is no subject so important, or which ought to call forth the attention and

earnest solicitude of all living so much as that of salvation, or the preparation of man while in this earthly tabernacle for the world beyond the grave. And most assuredly that system which can throw most light upon the unknown future, and which proves itself the best adapted to fit us for the same, ought to have the greatest claim upon our attention.

But again, were we about to leave the place of our nativity to seek for our future residence in some foreign clime, we should certainly be anxious to become acquainted with the same, and to know how we should render ourselves fitted to secure, when there, the greatest amount of happiness. And more than this, we should rationally conclude that information from the inhabitants of that land, from those who long had dwelt there, would be most calculated to enable us to prepare ourselves for the journey, and for the possession of our inheritance on our arrival. So also must it be in relation to the world to come, and to our being prepared for the important change that awaiteth all mankind.

Be not then surprised when we state, that what we have to reveal of eternal things, and of the preparation necessary to enter thereon, is not of man, the stranger to eternity and and the mere dweller on this earth; but that it is of God, that it is from direct revelations from the eternal world, and you will no longer wonder that we have asserted it to be the true—the only true.

We shall suppose ourselves, generally speaking, as addressing professors of religion, or at least those who believe in the old and new testaments, which obtains in christendom as the acknowledged word of God. And as to the sceptic in religious matters, we fear not his criticism if a

man of truth and of integrity, for there is that in the glorious system of salvation which commends itself to the judgment of every honest heart.

We would remark as a great general principle of truth, that mankind are fallen by sin, and are in a state of alienation from God; that Satan ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience, that he is prince of this world, and mankind have been long subject to his dominion.

Let us now consider what God hath done to deliver man from the thraldom of Satan, and to restore him to his favour and family. In the first place, he hath sent his Son, the only-begotten of the Father, into the world, in the likeness of man, to die—to redeem mankind from the consequences of sin; he was made subject unto death and the grave, but he hath burst the bonds of the tomb, hath triumphed over death, and hath ascended upon high to his Father's right hand, and hath thus made a way of escape for all who will walk in his footsteps.

Let us now consider the path he choose, and the precepts and commandments which he hath given. We find that before the commencement of his public career as a teacher of men, that he sought out the great forerunner (whom the Father appointed to go before him, to bear testimony of him, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world) in order that he might be baptized of him in Jordan, by which act he might make manifest to all the necessity of fulfilling all righteousness.

And here let us observe minutely what transpired on that memorable occasion. On his application to John for baptism, the prophet hesitated to administer the ordinance unto him, exclaiming that he had need rather to be baptized of

the Saviour ; but on his declaration that it became him to fulfil all righteousness of which the act of baptism was a portion, he suffered him to be baptized.

What a lesson is here given to the self-righteous, whose estimation of their own holiness justifies them in the rejection of the plain commandments of God. If the Son of Man, who was without sin, saw it necessary to render obedience unto the ordinance of baptism, how much more the necessity of its observance by the holiest and purest amongst mankind.

But further let us examine what were the principles which his immediate followers were taught to lay before mankind, and see if they were not in strict accordance with the example of their Great Master.

But we would first remark that, on the Saviour coming up out of the water, the heavens were opened, and John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. Thus was the Saviour confirmed with the Holy Ghost by the Father himself, there being no one holding the keys to administer in that holy ordinance, while with his own voice he proclaimed the Saviour as his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased.

Here then we find the intimate connexion between the ordinance of baptism and the acknowledgment of the Father of the relationship of such as are in sincerity obedient thereto unto himself.

But in order that we may be judged aright in regard to those who follow the Saviour in this matter, let us now refer to his teachings and those of the apostles on this subject. We must here direct the reader to the third chapter of John's gospel, relative to the teachings of the Saviour to

Nicodemus ; and we would that we were able to convince all who read, of the weight and importance thereof. The declaration of Jesus to this ruler of the Jews was, that we must be born again, and that we must be born of water and of the Spirit, in order to enter into the kingdom of God. And that this birth was not the device of the flesh, but of the Spirit ; for all mankind had been born naturally of the flesh, but that this birth of the Spirit was one of necessity arising from the alienated condition of mankind. This is also beautifully illustrated by the apostle John, in the first chapter of his gospel, where he declares that Christ came unto his own, but his own recieved him not ; but as many as received him, to them he gave power (or the privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ; and that this privilege was attained by a birth not after the will of the flesh, but we would add rather repugnant thereto, as too humiliating ; neither was it devised by the will of man, but of God. And here let us reflect for a moment, ere we proceed further. Has God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son to die for us ; and has the Saviour willingly acquiesced to the decrees of his Father whatever sufferings it might involve ; and shall man lightly treat this great law of adoption, and rejecting the counsel of God in this matter, give heed rather to the teachings of man, who will tell him it is of no avail ?

In the last chapter of the gospel of Luke, we have a narrative of an affecting interview between the Saviour and his disciples (after his resurrection) when he opened their understandings that they might understand the scriptures, and see that all things must be fulfilled that were written in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning him ; that it was

written of him—and that it behoved him to suffer and to rise again, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem ; but in connexion with this declaration he commanded them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, by the reception of the spirit, the promise of the Father.

Let us now examine how these servants of the Lord fulfilled the mandate of their master, who led them out as far as Bethany and was then parted from them and carried up into heaven. We find that they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, looking for the expected blessing, when suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. In contemplating the economy of redemption how many things, even from our familiarity with the scriptures, are we apt to overlook ; for instance, the necessity of being called, ordained, and qualified by authority and power from on high in order to go forth and proclaim the gospel of salvation ; yet how different from the qualifications deemed necessary in modern times. And again, the first manifestation of the outpouring of the Spirit upon these men of God was by the gift of tongues, a subject too frequently of ridicule amongst modern divines. But to resume our subject after this digression, let us consider that

these men so qualified, so endowed, and under the influence of such a teacher as the Spirit of God, would go forth at least to speak the plain unvarnished truth, and teach mankind the great means by which they might be saved.

It cannot be supposed that they would use indefinite or evasive language, which men could by no means understand, and which should cause mankind to dispute and quarrel for ages about its meaning, unless it arose from their own desire to pervert truth; but on the contrary, impressed with the responsibility of their high calling as ambassadors of Christ, they would seek to use the language of simplicity, and knowing too the true position of the people, they would direct them to those things necessary for them to attend to, in order to be introduced into the kingdom of God.

Behold them, then, on the day of Pentecost, after bearing a faithful testimony to Jesus of Nazareth, whom the people had crucified, being both Lord and Christ, directing the inquiring multitude what they must do to obtain remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost;—and what was it? In reply to the important question, "Men and brethren what shall we do?" We find this answer given, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,"

Shall man, then, we ask, ever presume to give any other reply to the same question? or, shall they intimate that the apostles, under the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God, would err in their answer?

Here, then, is the great secret of adoption into the kingdom of God—here is the birth not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; and how aptly adapted for the con-

sideration of fallen nature, laden with sin, and desirous to be relieved therefrom and enter into the kingdom of God, called upon to be baptized in the *name* of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, thus acknowledging him, as the Father acknowledges him, as the atoning Saviour of the world, following his footsteps in this holy ordinance and confessing the power of his name. But the remission of sins alone was not all that was promised on obedience, but that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God. And here commences the new life of the servant of the Lord.

By baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, obtaining remission of sins, and arising from the watery tomb to imbibe the spirit of God, and be thus quickened into new creatures under its life-giving and purifying influence. Allow us now to make a few reflections on the reception of the Spirit of God; what must be the result of being in possession of such an in-dwelling monitor? Must it not excite to purity, to virtue, and to holiness? Must it not bring intelligence and knowledge to the understandings of the happy recipients thereof? And is it not evident to all, that without it we never can become the children of God.

Even as by our natural birth we became the sons or daughters of our earthly parents, so, by being born of water and of the Spirit, we become the children of God.

But one word with regard to how the Holy Ghost was communicated to those that were baptized for the remission of sins; it was not by the heavens being opened, and the Spirit descending like a dove, as at the baptism of Christ: neither was it as when the apostles were assembled on the

day of Pentecost; but the Saviour having delegated the power and authority which he possessed unto his followers, it was communicated by the laying on of the hands of the same.

Thus we find in the eighth chapter of Acts, when Philip had gone down to Samaria, and when many believed and were baptized—both men and women—the apostles, Peter and John, were sent unto them, and they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. So, also, we read in the nineteenth chapter of the same, when the disciples were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, Paul laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake in tongues and prophesied.

Thus, then, were the Saints of old confirmed, and their membership ratified by the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

But now let us inquire what were the results of this gift, and how it was manifested amongst those who thus entered into covenant with God.

The declaration of the Saviour, when giving his commission unto his disciples, the commission to go and preach the gospel to every creature (as recorded in the last chapter of Mark) was that, he that believed and was baptized should be saved, but he that would not believe should be damned. And these signs should follow them that believe: "In my name," said the Saviour, "they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Here are glorious evidences promised of the enjoyment of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and do we not find them

realized? The apostles and others were endued with these powers, as it was manifested on the day of Pentecost, and through their subsequent career, as almost every page of the Acts of the Apostles bears testimony. But again, the apostle Paul reasons with the Corinthians, in the twelfth chapter of his first epistle, on the necessity of these gifts and blessings being in the church, and that they were all needful, as qualifications of the different members of the body of Christ, in order that it might be perfect and complete. And more than this: let us a little further contemplate the position of the church of Christ in that day. They had the heavens opened unto them, they received knowledge and instruction by the voice of the Spirit, by the ministering of angels, by the spirit of prophecy, by the gift of tongues, and of interpretation, even as it pleased their heavenly Father to grant them; and with so glorious a means of intelligence, who can doubt that they were not fitted to enter upon eternal things. Such as we have written, though very imperfectly, was the religion established by Jesus Christ and his apostles, and enjoyed by the christians of that day, and such it is at present.

Not resting upon the theories and systems of men, but on immediate and divine revelation for its origin, its ordinances and precepts, and for the glorious hopes which it inspires of eternal things.

Reader, we feel only to have entered upon the threshold of a great and all-important subject to the eternal interests of all mankind.

We have endeavoured to consider the true condition of man in his natural state, and what God has effected for his redemption and restoration, and how he is to realize the

blessings arising therefrom ; and we now exhort our readers, for a short time to lay aside the precepts and teachings of men, and, inasmuch as they believe in the scriptures, to search and examine and see if these things be not so,

We cannot close this subject as one that is merely theorizing or guessing at matters, in order to form a system or a creed ; but as one duly called and ordained to make known the great work of God, we ask you that read, and they that hear, to hearken diligently to these things ; and asking God for wisdom, to go forth and render the obedience of faith, and prove God for yourselves, and the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, warning you that the end is nigh, when the systems of men shall be overthrown, and the judgments of God be poured out upon the nations of the earth.

We have headed these remarks as a VOICE OF WARNING, and as such they will prove, bearing with them a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death, unto all that hear them. God will not be mocked, neither will he be held in derision with impunity, and they that receive whom he hath sent, receive him, while they that reject them, reject him.

The Lord is merciful and slow to anger, but his spirit will not always strive with man—his great purposes must be accomplished,—his people must be gathered and Zion be established, and blessed shall they be who listen to the warning voice, and flee for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel.

We are fully aware that in the foregoing remarks we have treated only of the grand introductory principles connected with the kingdom of God, and that there are a great

variety of subjects in connexion with the work of the Lord, in the last days, of great interest.

It is, therefore, more than probable, that as time and other engagements will permit, we may follow this with a satement of the origin and coming forth of the Book of Mormon, as also the great subject of the Gathering of the Saints in the Last Days, and the Coming of the Son of Man, &c.

THOMAS WARD.

Liverpool, August.

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